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phical sketch of the progress and present condition of this colony, including the cotton plantations, therein contained, will be found clear and accurate.

“ I would particularly call your Grace’s attention to the map accompanying the volumes. It appears that this colony now comprises an area of about 678,000 square miles; that is, a surface nearly six times greater than that of the United Kingdom, and above three times greater than that of France. It is estimated that the pastoral occupation within our limits already covers a surface about twice larger than that of the British Isles; and it is rapidly spreading, for the recent explorations of Messrs. Burke, Landsborough, Walker, and M’Kinlay, prove that almost the whole of our vast territory is available for settlement. In other words, Queensland is by far the most extensive in territory, while it is undoubtedly the most favoured in soil and climate, of all the provinces of the British empire.

“ They beg to suggest that one of the accompanying volumes should be presented to the Royal Geographical Society; and that the attention of that body be particularly directed to the prefixed map, as exhibiting the only authentic description of the boundaries and divisions of Queensland which has hitherto, so far as I know, been published.”

2. *Extracts of a Despatch from His Excellency Sir H. Barkly to the Duke of Newcastle, in reference to Mr. Landsborough’s Expedition, dated Melbourne, 24th August, 1862.*

“ AGREEABLY to the instructions in your Grace’s despatch of 26th May, No. 31, I placed the watch therewith forwarded, on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, in the hands of King, the explorer, and have now the honour to transmit a paper containing a copy of the proceedings on the occasion, which were of a very gratifying nature.

“ It will be perceived that I availed myself of one of the meetings of the Royal Society of Victoria, under whose auspices the Burke and Wills Expedition was despatched; and that Mr. Landsborough, the leader of one of the parties sent to its relief, who had just reached Melbourne after a most successful journey from the Gulf of Carpentaria, happened fortunately to be present, and added additional interest to the same.

“ I stated when I last wrote that Mr. Walker had started on 20th December from the depôt on the Albert River, with the view of following up the tracks of Burke and his companions, which he had

found on the Flinders River, on his outward-journey; and that Mr. Landsborough, who subsequently returned to the Albert from a fruitless journey to the south-west, intended to leave it about the middle of February on a similar errand, in case the first party should miss the trail.

“This extra precaution was not unnecessary, for after tracing Burke to his second or third Return Camp with difficulty, owing to the rains which had fallen, Mr. Walker was obliged to abandon the attempt in consequence of not finding any signs of his farther progress southwards; and striking off towards the north-east, managed, not without many hardships and dangers from the exhaustion of his stores, and loss of his horses, to reach Port Denison safely, by the end of April. Mr. Landsborough likewise, as will be seen from the narrative, failed to discover the route pursued by Burke, though he travelled up the banks of the Flinders for about 400 miles, the heavy floods which prevailed having even obliterated the recent traces of Walker and the large number of horses which he took with him. Notwithstanding this failure, however, Landsborough continued his course in a southerly direction, merely crossing the hills for about 20 miles, till he reached the source of the Thomson, a river known to flow towards the south-west, and found by him to be one of the main tributaries of the Cooper. When within about 150 miles, however, from the *dépôt* formed by Mr. Burke prior to starting for Carpentaria, fearing for the sufficiency of his provisions, which from the first had been short, he turned off, and striking the River “Warrego,” followed it down until he struck the Darling itself, above Fort Burke.

“By this journey, in which he was the second to cross the Australian Continent, through a country so favourable, and with such facility that a foal dropped on the Flinders accompanied its dam all the way, Mr. Landsborough has not only made a most important addition to our geographical knowledge, but has practically accelerated in a remarkable degree the formation of a northern settlement.

“With regard to the first, he has taught us that Sturt’s Desert extends but a short distance eastwards, and that between it and the foot of the eastern chains of mountains, spreads a fine pastoral country, watered by rivers which find an outlet in lakes to the south-west; whilst, more unexpected still, the water-parting between those streams trending southward, and those which flow north to the Gulf of Carpentaria, proves to be scarcely more than 20 miles in width, and may be crossed at an elevation of about a thousand feet.

"As to the second point, already stock are being driven from New South Wales to these fresh pastures, and the best informed newspapers here predict that, before another year shall have elapsed, the whole continent east of the 140th degree will be mapped out and occupied for grazing purposes.

"It may appear strange that with large tracts within the limits of existing settlements yet but nominally stocked, the exodus to tropical Australia should be so rapid, but the rainfall of the new country is believed to be heavier and more regular than on the Darling; and at the same time the Australian air is so comparatively dry, even in the tropics, and the all-pervading forests of "gum-trees," so open and free from jungle, that the climate is far healthier, and more endurable by European constitutions, than in similar low latitudes in other portions of the globe.

"Moreover, the prospect of easy access to the sea on the north coast is a great attraction to squatters, and it will be seen from the accompanying pamphlet, that plans for a city at the mouth of the Albert River have assumed something like a definite shape, and are encouraged, I believe, by the Queensland authorities.

"The task of Australian exploration, as undertaken by this colony two years since, having been thus effectually performed; the veil lifted from the fate of the intrepid pioneers, whom it sent forth; and the chief objects which the promoters of the scheme had in view, being in process of successful accomplishment, it remained but to recall the party under Mr. Howitt, who had been instructed not to abandon the depôt on Cooper Creek until the safety of Walker and of Landsborough's parties had been ascertained.

"Some hesitation was felt by the Exploration Committee here in so doing, in the absence of all information regarding M'Kinlay, who was despatched about a year since from South Australia to look for Mr. Burke, and who, after discovering what he conceived to be the remains of the missing explorers (though in reality but those of Gray), again proceeded northwards in December last, and has not since been heard of. Learning, however, from the South Australian Government that no apprehensions are entertained as to his safety, and that he had orders to explore the country towards Central Mount Stewart, and to return to the settlements *via* Finnis Springs, where ample supplies await him, it was at length determined to despatch the requisite instructions to Mr. Howitt, directing him to bury what provisions he can spare, for the benefit of whoever may visit the depôt, and to return with all hands to Mount Serle, *en route* to Adelaide."

In reply to questions put by Sir Charles Nicholson and the President, Mr. LANDSBOROUGH said the country on the Gulf of Carpentaria was extremely fine,

and, from his experience as a squatter, eminently adapted for growing wool. He had had sheep within the tropics, on a station situated a little to the north of Rockhampton, on the shores of Broad Sound; and although the sheep did remarkably well there, and grew a very fine description of fleece, and of a sufficient weight to make wool-growing there very profitable, and much more so than in some parts more to the southward that had a very cold climate, where he had had sheep-runs, yet he considered much of the country that he had seen at Carpentaria far superior. Before M^r Arthur introduced fine-woolled sheep into Australia, nothing but hair was produced there; and now, as far north as latitude 19° from the southern shores of Australia, the colonists have demonstrated the fact that, by judicious breeding, they can everywhere produce fine wool. And it is quite notorious that, on the whole, the wool grown in the north is at least as fine as that which is grown in the south. With regard to the climate of Australia, he ought to know something about it; for he had travelled all over the settled parts, and also from the northern to the most southern shores. On the shores of Carpentaria they had about 100 people during the hottest period of the year, and he never heard of illness among them. Again, at Rockhampton, there was at one time a rush of population from the southern parts of Australia to the gold diggings which had been discovered there. Some ten thousand people were collected; and though they were disappointed at not finding gold so abundantly as they expected, and though they were there during the warmest season, he never heard any complaint of want of health among them. Before starting for Carpentaria he was told that it would be impossible to land the horses; but the only trouble they had when they ascended the Albert River was to throw a few planks from the vessel to the land, and the horses walked ashore. The natives in the north were like those in the south, and he considered them on the whole neither inferior nor superior. He found the "Plains of Promise" quite equal to what Captain Stokes described them to be,—a fine pastoral country, and very open forest. With regard to the rivers that fall into the Gulf of Carpentaria,—the Albert, the Flinders, and the Nicholson,—the best account we had of them was still that by Captain Stokes. However, when he was at Carpentaria, Lieutenant Woods, of the man-of-war sloop *Victoria*, was sent to explore the Albert, and he returned with a report that it was navigable for the sloop. The Flinders was explored by Captain Norman, and he thought it superior to the Albert. The Nicholson was not as good as the others.

Mr. MIDDLETON, at the request of the President, related the particulars of the great peril in which his party found themselves upon one occasion, owing to a sudden flood caused by heavy rains. They had reached rather a large creek with only water-holes in it. They were compelled to camp there owing to some of the bullocks being knocked up from the great heat, the thermometer standing at 166° on the side of the tents. During the night it came on to rain a little: it increased all the next day. The creek began to rise, and it was thought desirable to be moving; but as the camels and bullocks were all out grazing, and it would be difficult to collect them together, it was resolved to wait till the morning. In the morning they found they were surrounded by water; nothing but a sea in every direction, as far as the eye could reach, except to the south-east, where there were some patches of sandhills about three-quarters of a mile off. There was no time to be lost, not even to get breakfast: the men had to swim out to get the bullocks, camels, and sheep. The flour, provisions, and ammunition had to be placed on the camels' backs, and they made their way to the sandhills, where they were compelled to remain about eleven days before they could move. The region which they were then traversing consisted of nothing but sand as red as Cayenne pepper; not a stone nor even a pebble was to be seen. They were months and months on the sand, but fortunately always got water, though sometimes they travelled twenty or twenty-five miles, and on one occasion twenty-nine, before coming to a creek

with water-holes. The camels were very serviceable, and seemed to be the very kind of animal wanted in Australia; but they suffered more from the want of water than the horses. Mr. M'Kinlay was an excellent leader, and acted with great judgment on the journey: a more noble and generous-hearted man he never met. Mr. Middleton then called attention to the various specimens of fossil organic remains, and articles of native manufacture, which he had brought home with him and had placed upon the table.

Mr. LANDSBOROUGH was then questioned at some length by Mr. Crawford, respecting the "Plains of Promise" as an eligible country for the growth of wool; and in reply he stated that he was there during the wet season, from October to February, and that during the first three weeks on the Albert River the mean temperature was within a fraction of 80°. In the southern parts of Australia he had no doubt the thermometer stood quite as high as Mr. Middleton had stated. He quite agreed that in certain portions in the south there were extremes of heat and cold; but he did not consider that an advantage. So far from thinking the northern portions of the country unsuited for pastoral purposes, he was sorry that he had not gone to Queensland sooner. Old Australians would confirm his statement that the hottest parts of Australia were on the Lower Murray and the Lower Darling. This was owing in some measure to hot winds, of which they had none in the tropics.

Mr. CRAWFURD said this might be true in summer, but it would not apply to the average of the whole year. Did Mr. Landsborough perceive any difference between the vegetation of the "Plains of Promise," which appeared to be in the latitude of Bombay—rather a warm climate for a large fleece and fine wool—and the vegetation of Queensland?

Mr. LANDSBOROUGH said there was a difference, and the advantage was on the side of the "Plains of Promise." It was just the kind of vegetation that a sheep-farmer liked best.

Mr. CRAWFURD said it might be. He had seen good sheep, so far as the flesh was concerned, in Java and Sumatra; but the wool was the question. The experiment had never yet been tried of producing fine wool in such a temperature.

Mr. LANDSBOROUGH replied that he had tried sheep-farming for several years in Queensland, within the tropic of Capricorn, and he found that sheep were profitable there for their wool.

Mr. CRAWFURD said the sheep was intended for a temperate climate. Was not the fleece given to the sheep by nature to protect it from the cold? And when it came within eighteen degrees of the equator it could not possibly require the fleece there that it required in a cold or temperate climate.

Mr. LANDSBOROUGH.—You are theorising. Who of all the human race have got the most wool on their heads? Is it not the negro who lives within the tropics? (Laughter.)

Sir C. NICHOLSON said it gave him great delight to see Mr. Landsborough and Mr. Middleton in England. It was but recently that he had had the opportunity of expressing his high appreciation of the courage, enterprise, endurance, and ability of Mr. Landsborough, and of his merits as a scientific explorer. With reference to the country which he had passed through, it was now established that the whole of the region to the east of the 138th meridian was of the best possible description, abounding in the finest pastures, and capable of occupation and settlement. That magnificent district of the valley of the Fitzroy, an area as large as the British Isles, presented enormous tracts ready for occupation, requiring no clearing, simply enclosing, applicable for the purposes of pasture, and also for the growth of all kinds of tropical produce. He might mention that one of the first instalments of cotton from Queensland was received in London from Brisbane a few days ago. It consisted of seventeen bales: two of the bales fetched 3s. 6d. a pound, at public auction; and the remainder averaged about 2s. 6d. a pound. This seems a very encouraging

circumstance, as showing the capability of the colony for the production of this great staple, and the superior character of the article itself. Sir Charles Nicholson again urged the importance of the Imperial Government taking some steps with reference to the establishment of a new and independent colony in North Australia; and concluded his observations by stating as a fact, in answer to Mr. Crawford's objections, that there were at the present time above a million of sheep within the tropics, many of them in a line as far north as 18° ; the clip every year giving an average yield of 2 lbs. per sheep.

The PRESIDENT congratulated the Meeting upon the light which had been thrown upon this Australian subject by practical men, who had brought out facts against theories. He rejoiced particularly in the result of these communications; because he had for many years advocated the establishment of a colony in North Australia, and he had always held to the opinion that it would turn out a good country for settlement. He believed the isothermal lines were not similar in North Australia and in the southern parts of India and the Malayan Archipelago. The extent of the Indian Ocean on both sides of the peninsula of Hindostan communicated great heat to that portion of land; whereas in Australia, with great breadths of land and high plateaus on either side, there were geographical reasons for a different arrangement of isothermal lines which even in theory explained the facts that had been brought before them by Mr. Landsborough and others. He agreed with Sir Charles Nicholson that North Australia ought to be formed into a new colony. In the maps of the Society of Useful Knowledge in 1848 they would find North Australia mapped out under that name. It was then a country without inhabitants, without prospects, without the least notion on our part of anything being realised there, except that Captain Stokes had disembarked in the southern part of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and had very appropriately given to that land the name of the "Plains of Promise." These were very gratifying facts to old geographers; and he was much delighted with the result of the discussion. He begged, on the part of the Society, to return their most hearty thanks to Mr. Landsborough and Mr. Middleton.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *Extract of a Letter from DR. BEKE to SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON.*

My object is to direct attention to what may be called the Delta of the Ethiopian Nile—formed when the Delta of Lower Egypt was not—which has a material effect on the latter; for, whatever may be the source of the waters of the inundation of Lower Egypt, it is the Atbara which brings down from the Upper Delta the *slime* which fertilizes the land.

The extensive *alluvial* plains of Ethiopia, which have thus been abraded and carried down by the Nile to form and fertilize Lower Egypt, are those to which Mr. Samuel W. Baker has recently drawn attention as "a possible source of an abundant supply of cotton," and which (as you will perceive from the enclosed document) I brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government *thirteen years ago*; this being, in fact, the source whence the Egyptian cotton was derived, which forty years ago did not exist, and now in this present year is calculated to produce 150 millions of pounds in weight!
